

later at the island of Lemnos. There is extensive use of their diaries and letters. As in Bill Gammage's classic *The Broken Years*, one gets the impression of young men who were dangerously naive. They often saw the war as a great adventure with little realisation of the horrors that would occur. Meanwhile, the politicians and senior commanders were, Winter contends, 'muddled' in their thinking about the Gallipoli venture and 'mercilessly pushed forward' with inherently faulty schemes.

The most interesting part of the book deals with the landing on 25 April. Winter suggests that the true story is difficult to recount due to the secrecy enforced by military commanders and the fact that so many vital documents are missing. He argues, though, that three distinct and consecutive schemes existed for the landing, each with a clear tactical logic behind it. The last of these, contrary to the usual version in studies of Gallipoli, indicated that Anzac Cove was the chosen landing point and the troops did not arrive there by mistake. Winter also contests prevailing views about the soldiers' conduct at Gallipoli. Some formations disintegrated under Turkish firepower, with men straggling back towards the beach. Other soldiers, of course, fought heroically. A special bond was formed among those who survived the fighting on the first day at Gallipoli.

Winter writes well and his book is easy to follow. There are some excellent photographs and maps. The book also appears to be thoroughly researched although there are occasional factual errors. I am not sure that he adds as greatly to the Gallipoli story as he claims or whether expert military historians will think much of some of his arguments. For the general reader interested in Australians' experience of war, though, *25 April 1915* is certain to be of interest.

DAVID CARMENT

Gail Reekie, ed. *On the edge: women's experiences of Queensland*. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994. ISBN 0702224618 RRP \$29.95.

The title of this edited collection of essays, *On the Edge*, relates not only to the marginalised position of women, but of all Queenslanders in relation to Victoria and New South Wales.

Queenslanders, it would seem, are searching for new identities through their histories and literature. Work began on this book in 1989 and it is reasonable to speculate that after a year of celebrating the bicentennial of the settlement of Sydney, which became synonymous with the settlement of all Australia, the collaborators were keen to ensure other voices were heard in the construction of our national identity.

The bibliographic survey concludes that women have been excluded so far from most general histories of Queensland and this text therefore can be read as a contribution to the search for a revised and feminised Queensland identity. The masculinist images of the frontier days no longer reflect the way Queenslanders view themselves. Several of the writers identify David Malouf, Jessica Anderson and Thea Astley as the most influential figures in reconstructing Queenslanders' fictional identities. Also significant, argue many of the writers, is the distinctive architecture of the Queenslander house and the way various spaces were created and used by the occupants, and by women in particular.

There are thirteen essays covering sources, histories, spaces, and politics and parties. The majority of the contributors, of whom all are women, were connected in some way with Griffith University at the time of publication and the camera-ready copy was produced with the assistance of the Division of Humanities at Griffith University, which makes this book a truly collaborative effort. The collection is presented as a contribution to women's studies rather than to women's history, though most of the essays use historical methodology and the book is published under the University of Queensland's Studies in Australian History series.

The Introduction by Gail Reekie, addresses the relevance of region to feminist enquiry. Region, argues Reekie, is defined by borders constructed for the use of geographers, demographers and politicians.

Because women were primarily located in the domestic and private sphere as daughters, wives and mothers and only temporarily or informally (if ever) as entrepreneurs or paid workers, the majority were isolated from the effects of such public and formal regional boundaries. Is region, then, a useful concept in the analysis of women's relationship to history, culture and government? (p.2.)

Reekie suggests that for regionalism to be relevant to feminist study, the borders must be

redefined. She describes this collection as the beginning of a dialogue about the connections between women, space and time. My one criticism of this collection, is that in raising these issues in the Introduction, the reader expects the essays to explicitly address these concerns but most often this is not the case.

There is a tendency in most of the essays to assume women's oppression and to celebrate women's resilience, often without evidence. There is, for example, only one reference to the possibility of genuine partnerships between men and women in pioneering endeavour. I found Aline Gillespie's essay, which describes how the advent of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) into the Lockyer Valley enriched the lives of young women in the region between 1935-40, one of the most powerful because of her skilful use of evidence. Gillespie discusses the limited options for companionship and leisure for so many of the girls who were unable to continue at school beyond grade eight because their labour was needed to support their families. Those living "off the bitumen" were isolated further by unreliable black soil roads and lack of transport. In the time before teenagers were invented, these young women were neither children nor married women and apparently in an hiatus. Gillespie's use of oral evidence to describe the marginalisation of these young women, is compelling. The YWCA provided a variety of Saturday afternoon entertainments including picnics, tennis, craft activities and most importantly opportunities for companionship.

Readers in the Northern Territory will recognise many of the themes in *On The Edge*, and will no doubt grin wryly at the notion of Queenslanders regarding themselves as marginalised. More importantly, however, this collection suggests that women's experiences are unrestrained by traditional regional borders, and that landscape, space and time are more likely to define women's domains.

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**Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGarth, Marian Quartly, *Creating a nation*, McPhee Gribble, South Yarra, 1994, ISBN 0869140957, 360pp, \$16.96**

It is sometimes said that both men and women created this nation and that it is foolish to argue otherwise. Men, it could be said, provided much of the brawn and, for a century or more, the brain, in the paid workforce; women saw to it that there was another generation to inherit and carry on their efforts. By and large, this has been the conventional view of Australian society and *Creating a Nation*, authored by four women who are senior academics, Pat Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath and Marian Quartly, seeks to challenge that assumption. The authors note in the introduction: 'this book starts from the premise that gender is integral to the processes that comprise the history of Australia - that political and economic as well as social and cultural history are constituted in gendered terms.' As a product of collaboration it is impressive; individual authorial style remains yet the book itself is wholly integrated. *Creating a Nation* is valuable in identifying not only the changes which have taken place to women's condition since 1788 but the effect on many of the women who endured them. There are timely lessons to be learnt from it.

The book begins, appropriately, by locating the history within the context of Aboriginal experiences of British colonisation. It is a measure of the pervasive nature of the masculine Anglo colonial construction of Australian history that the reader is continually disconcerted by the new interpretations offered by these academics; at times bewildered, appalled or charmed with the slightly guilty feeling of female focus. This is a big book on a big subject, which philosophically and methodologically is taking on a powerful construction established in two hundred years of political and social history. It is difficult to do *Creating a Nation* justice in a small review but I hope that I have made it clear that this is a significant and important work.

I found most interesting and heartening those sections dealing with twentieth century events where women's voices become stronger and more confident, as they, usually in times of national peril, were permitted a more active role within society. The dichotomy between the roles